

Transcript of Sultan Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar's Response to Ambassador Campbell's Remarks on Sunday, February 4, 2007 at the Sultan's Palace, Sokoto.

It is a great pleasure and thanks to the Almighty Allah this afternoon, we have such an august delegation visiting us. We are really grateful to the government and people of the United States of America for identifying with us, for all the efforts put-in to foster a stronger bond of friendship and relationship between our two countries. There is no doubt we value our friendship and relationship with countries that really identify with us, and the U.S. of course we know is one of such countries. Some of us are privilege in our lives to have worked with highly placed American people.

In my opening statement when I mentioned or personally recognized the American Ambassador, I made mentioned of the Defense Attaché as a very, very important and key man in any embassy anywhere in the world. I was privileged to serve in that capacity for three years, and you noticed that I spent an extra minute or so chatting with my colleague, I called him my colleague because I am still part and parcel of that community. We always have a very strong bond of relationship even after the end of our tenure, we always keep in touch. I have a very long list of American senior officers whom I still get in touch with, after they have finished their tour in Islamabad and went back to Washington and other places. So I personally wish to recognize my colleague.

We thank you most sincerely for taking your time to be here and the three main points that brought you, we are really grateful for such kind gesture, that you are extending to us, we appreciate such, and we also call on other countries that identify with us to come and do much more to our people here. You can count on our cooperation at all times in all your endeavors while in Nigeria, and you can be rest assured we will give you our total cooperation and total support.

There are lots of problems due to past or due to our cultures and so on and so forth, but gradually Insha Allah we will try to over come them. The VVF problem, we know what it is, but we need to educate our people more, and me being a modern Sultan, without putting aside my tradition, which I value and cherish very much will ensure that issues like polio eradication, HIV/AIDS total eradication in Nigeria and this VVF are top most in my agenda. I can confidently say we have started, because a couple of days back I received the National Action Committee on AIDS here in the palace and we had very good and fruitful deliberations, and we are working hand in hand. Sometime back in December we had the National Committee on Polio Eradication, and you know the controversy that engulfed this country before, that polio vaccine are not safe, but we have told the world that such vaccines are safe and they are good for our children, because we need to have healthy people in our communities. So things like that, issues like that are top most on the agenda of this Sultanate and we will pursue them vigorously.

We thank you very much for taking your time to be here. while you are in Sokoto, please feel free, enjoy the hospitality of our people and when it is time for you to leave, we wish you Allah's journey mercies and we hope to see you more, and be rest assured any time you want to come calling, we are open to receiving you at any time. Today being Sunday, a rest day, we still open our doors to receive you, that gives you the impression that yes, we are ready to receive you at any time you come into Sokoto. Thank you very much and may Allah bless us all and may Allah continue to strengthen the relationship between our two countries.